

TESTIMONY OF THE HAWAI`I POLICE DEPARTMENT

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 137

**REQUESTING A MEETING ON THE IMPACTS OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA AS A CASH
CROP ON HAWAII'S AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY**

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

DATE : Friday, March 27, 2015

TIME : 9:15 A.M.

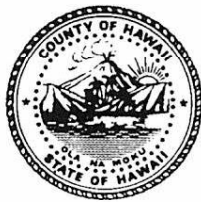
**PLACE : Conference Room 329
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street**

PERSON TESTIFYING:

**Police Chief Harry S. Kubojiri
Hawai`i Police Department
County of Hawai`i**

(Written Testimony Only)

William P. Kenoi
Mayor



Harry S. Kubojiri
Police Chief

Paul K. Ferreira
Deputy Police Chief

County of Hawai'i

POLICE DEPARTMENT

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March 25, 2015

Representative Della Au Belatti
Chairman and Committee Members
Committee on Health
415 South Beretania Street, Room 329
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

**Re: HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 137, REQUESTING A MEETING ON THE
IMPACTS OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA AS A CASH CROP ON HAWAII'S
AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY**

Dear Representative Au Belatti:

The Hawai'i Police Department supports House Concurrent Resolution 137, with its purpose being to request a meeting on the impacts of Medical Marijuana as a cash crop on Hawai'i's agricultural industry.

The Hawai'i Police Department believes that the effects of Marijuana as a "Cash Crop" could be catastrophic in terms of additional agricultural crimes being committed in our community. We have seen the diversion of streams, other agricultural thefts, and home invasion robberies in conjunction with illicit and medicinal marijuana and believe should Marijuana become a cash crop, it will lead to a greater number of those types of incidents.

We are further concerned that the usurping of home rule with respect to portions of HB321 will leave our department and community in a vulnerable position unable to adequately respond with local ordinances to deter such activity.

It is for these reasons, we urge this committee to approve this resolution and its intent.

Thank you for allowing the Hawai'i Police Department to provide comments relating to House Concurrent Resolution 137.

Sincerely,


HARRY S. KUBOJIRI
POLICE CHIEF



Hawaii's voice for sensible, compassionate, and just drug policy

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair. Rep. Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair

Friday, March 27, 2015, 9:15 a.m.

Conference Room 329

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

**Executive Director Rafael Kennedy in opposition – HCR 137 – Requesting a Meeting On
The Impacts of Medical Marijuana as a Cash Crop On Hawaii's Agricultural Industry.**

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Creagan, and members of the committees,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this resolution. The fact is that this resolution is a deeply misguided attempt to prevent implementing compassionate marijuana policies on a disingenuous claim of environmentalism. The idea that the establishment of a tightly regulated dispensary system will make marijuana into a "cash crop" is not founded in reality. Medical marijuana patients are already using marijuana in the state of Hawaii, and whether or not there is a dispensary system, that marijuana needs to be cultivated. Right now, what patients cannot grow themselves is being sourced from the black market, where there are no regulations on how marijuana can be grown, and where growers make decisions not on the basis of best practices, but on the basis of their need for secrecy.

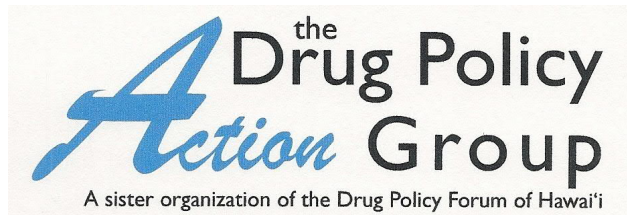
With the establishment of a dispensary system, these problems will be ameliorated. Producers will be subject to inspection by the department of health, and the department will be in a position to incentivize safe growing practices. To that end, the department of health should consult, and I believe is already consulting, with the both the Department of Agriculture, and the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, in developing rules for the program.

To argue that medical marijuana will be a "cash crop" replacing sugar and pineapples in damaging Hawaii's ecosystems is either misguided or disingenuous. Marijuana is already being grown, and must be grown in the state. The only question is whether we can regulate it in such a way as to make it safer and more reliable for patients, and better for our communities.

Rafael Kennedy

Executive Director,
Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii

The Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii works to educate policymakers and the public about effective ways of addressing drug issues in Hawai'i with sensible and humane policies that reduce harm, expand treatment options, and adopt evidence-based practices while optimizing the use of scarce resources.



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Dedicated to promoting safe, responsible, and effective drug policies since 1993

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

FROM: PAMELA LICHTY, M.P.H., PRESIDENT

DATE: MARCH 27, 2015, ROOM 329, 9:15 A.M.

RE: HCR 137: Requesting A Meeting on the Impacts of Medical Marijuana as a Cash Crop on Hawaii's Agricultural Industry - **Opposed**

Good morning Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Creagan, and members of the Committee. My name is Pam Lichty and I'm President of the Drug Policy Action Group (DPAG), the government affairs arm of the Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii.

We find this resolution poorly thought out and unnecessary. Since when is a resolution needed to ask the Director of Agriculture to convene a meeting with various entities involved in state planning, water and land issues? All it would take would be a simple request from any legislator.

The Department of Health, the state organization most involved with designing a workable cannabis dispensary system, is already working closely with the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources at U.H. as they develop rules.

Moreover it is disingenuous to suggest that marijuana, for whatever use, has never been grown in Hawaii. What about Puna Butter, Kauai Electric , Maui Wowie, and other "brands" that have been known worldwide for decades?

The demand for medical cannabis will indeed increase once a legitimate and regulated system is in place. **But instead of the proceeds going to criminal enterprises, it will go to licensed growers.** It will be inspected for safety, potency and strain and sold to patients with a legitimate use for it. The state will benefit from the licensing fees and from the taxes on the product sold.

We have heard from both individual farmers and from agricultural organizations that licensed marijuana production for medical use would be a real boon to the state's agriculture industry and will augment, but certainly not displace, the food crops that are being encouraged to replace sugar and pineapple.

There are also several inaccuracies in this resolution such as the claim that marijuana is "a genetically modified crop that is constantly cross bred to increase its potency." This statement conflates the ancient practice of selective breeding with the relatively new biotechnological process of genetic modification.

Again, we believe that HCR 137 is a poorly drafted and unnecessary resolution and we respectfully ask the Committee to defer it.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.